

Opportunities Await in Public Relations

Public relations has become more sophisticated and demanding. It is one of the most fulfilling and exciting careers, and the industry has grown tremendously over the past 10 years.

By [Laricia Smit](#) ^{26 Apr 2002}

The business world has come to realise that it has more to worry about than just the customer. Every company has to be concerned about its reputation, that is why good company public relations is synonymous with good management. It is a management function which establishes and maintains mutual understanding between the organisation and its internal and external stakeholders. No organisation can succeed unless it creates understanding and support.

Public relations can contribute to the success of every function in an organisation, whether it is marketing, media relations or staff training. It helps management keep abreast of stakeholders' opinions and it persuades them to believe in the organisation. The quality and value of the public relations function will determine whether management appreciates it as it is measured through the results achieved.

Today public relations is a global activity. Practitioners in South Africa should be trained to live up to the international standards of the profession. Those entering the field are expected to possess skills of the highest quality.

A few attributes of global public relations practitioners are:

- They understand the importance of networking with captains of industries.
- They have local knowledge and cultural sensitivity.
- They appreciate the benefits of cross-cultural work.
- They have a good command of English.
- The public relations team must have practitioners with different degrees of maturity.
- They must expose themselves to public relations theory by educating themselves.
- They must be involved in the professional body of the profession nationally, in this case PRISA.

Practitioners must be versatile at all levels. They need the ability and flexibility to write well, interface with the media, create events, detect and analyse problems and make decisions. At management levels they need to develop strategies to counteract threats, deal with issues and take advantage of opportunities facing the organisations.

Public relations practitioners should keep in mind that they should be tolerant at all times. They must show integrity and sincerity, as well as be responsible in everything they do, and most important of all, have courtesy.

Public relations practice thrives around the world and has a very bright future. It will grow to become one of the world's most sought after professions. No longer is it a job associated with glitz and glamour, but one associated with hard work and strategic business communication skills.

It is becoming a mature profession and needs talented, educated people. Education is an important cornerstone of the profession and is growing rapidly in our region. This can be seen by the increasing

number of students at both under- and post-graduate level studying through the PRISA Education & Training Centre.

Talking about PRISA's achievements, the Institute is a founder member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management Associations, and the first and only public relations institute in the world to obtain the ISO 9002 quality standard certification. Thus providing quality services to its members.

Advanced and specialisation courses in public relations have been developed to achieve PRISA's vision to recognise public relations practitioners as role-players of significance. These advanced practice and management courses provide the practitioner with the necessary skills to achieve all the needs to make South Africans globally competitive in this field, e.g. after completing the public relations management course, the practitioner can provide strategic input to management and construct communication strategies in line with corporate goals.

For more information on public relations as a career phone PRISA on (011) 726 7356.

ABOUT LARICIA SMIT

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